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France-Libya: The French Foreign Ministry has sought
to clarify its intentions on arms negotiations. (Page 7)

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France-Libya: The French Foreign Ministry has sought to clarify its intentions regarding arms negotiations with Tripoli.

In a recent conversation with Ambassador Shriver, Foreign Minister Schumann stressed that when an arms contract with Libya is signed, a long lead-time on deliveries will be an important part of the deal. Schumann also said there would be strict and precise clauses in the contract forbidding the transfer of the weapons to other powers, or their use in "other theaters of operation." He reiterated previous French denials that France planned to occupy bases evacuated by the US and UK, but said that it was possible that a "few" French technicians and instructors might be sent to these installations.

Schumann did not reveal the size or exact composition of the arms package for Libya--apparently because this is still a matter of dispute within the government--but following the talks a high Foreign Ministry official said that France had decided to respond generously to Libyan requests. He added, however, that France intended to maintain the option of suspending delivery of the equipment under certain circumstances. These include any violation of the nontransfer or other restrictive clauses in the contract, and any clear indication that Libya was coming under the control of the UAR.

Schumann was earlier [redacted] opposed to an arms deal with Libya. He now apparently hopes that if France strings out the delivery time on the arms and imposes strict controls on their use, the deal will not have a significant impact on the Middle East military balance of power over the next year. Schumann believes this period to be critical for peace efforts.

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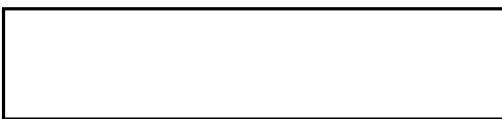
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